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FOR THE NORTH-AMERICAN JOURNAL.

Pompey's Pillar.

The learned of the 15th century were more ready than observers, to give names to all the remains of antiquity. These denominations have been handed down from age to age, and their propriety has remained unquestioned, though the appellation was often bestowed upon very slight presumptions in favour of its correctness. It is known that Cæsar raised a Monument over the remains of Pompey, and that after the lapse of more than two centuries, the Emperor Adrian on a visit to Egypt, ordered it to be repaired at his own expense. This monument was supposed, at the above period, to be discovered in an immense Pillar, which was found to stand within the limits of the ancient city of Alexandria; and it accordingly bears his name. Some however considered it as a trophy of Septimius Severus. But it stands upon the ruins of the ancient City; and in the time of Severus, the City of the Ptolemies was not in ruins. From this and other facts ascertained by modern travellers, it is seen upon what grounds the name of Pompey has been attached to it. And as nothing is to be learned of it from the Greek or Roman classicks, and nothing is reported from the Arabs, it is upon the accounts of modern travellers alone that our opinion of it must be formed. It is described by Citizen Norry, a member of the French Institute, who visited it in company with several other French Scavans, as evidently compounded of ancient fragments which, separately constituting its four parts, base, pedestal, column, and capital, differ very much from each other in their material and style of execution. It is situated on a gentle eminence, and placed on a base formed of a square fragment of an Egyptian obelisk, which must have been brought to the place, as the hieroglyphick characters inscribed on it are reversed. On this base rests a bad pedestal, which supports a beautiful shaft highly polished on every side, excepting that exposed to the sands of the desert, and consisting of an entire piece of Thebaick granite, sixty three feet in length. This is surmounted by a Corinthian capital of much coarser work-

culiar grace and felicity to indicate some *precise* period of time, in the following manner: "I can only assure the *Ouse* that the moment, *when that* I came *for* to hear of the intended County meeting," &c. &c.

manship, and remarkable for the massiveness of its form. Although the order on the whole be considered Corinthian, from the capital, it does not still exhibit the Grecian proportions. Those of the shaft approach the Ionick. This was doubtless once part of an ancient edifice, the magnificence and elegance of whose structure, the purity of its execution still attests. Sufficient discoveries have been made by partial removals of the soil round this column, to justify a belief, that deeper researches might lay open the foundations and atrium of the portico, to which this column belonged. From the circumstances which have been mentioned, the period of its construction may be referred with equal probability to that of the Califs, or that of the Greek Emperours, since, if the pedestal and capital are executed with sufficient elegance to belong to the latter era, they are not so perfect, but that they may have been the production of the first. A party of English sailors, near 80 years since, carried a rope over the capital by means of a kite, and then ascended and drank punch there. Citizen Norry availed himself of this expedient, but without giving credit in his *Memoirs*, to the English ingenuity which suggested it, to obtain accurately its several admeasurements. He estimated the total height of the monument at 88 French feet, 6 inches, and found that in consequence of the instability of its foundation, it had an inclination of about eight inches. Of its particular dimensions, he made

The height of the base - - - 5 f. 6 3-10 in.

Do. pedestal - 10 f.

Do. capital - - 9 f. 10 6-10 in.

Diam. of lower part of column - 8 f. 4 in.

Upper - - - - - 7 f. 2 8-10 in.*

He found a depression of the capital of 2 inches, which gave him reason to suppose there had been once a projection on the top, for supporting the figure of the hero in whose honour it was elevated. Ed. Wortely Montagu declares (in a *Memoir* in *Phil. Trans.* vol. 57) that he found a coin within the circumference of the shaft, which was one of *Vespasian's*. He affirms that the pedestal on which the pillar, with its base, rests, is hollow, and that he entered it. He speaks too of a mutilated inscription, containing remains of Greek words or letters, on the base of the pillar. It is much to be regretted that this inscription is no longer legible. It would

* A French foot is to an English foot, as 16 to 15.

undoubtedly tell us something of its history, and inform us if it were raised either to commemorate the name of Pompey, or the glory of the Roman Emperour.

[A very learned dissertation on this celebrated monument, may be found in a quarto volume of Dr. White, Arabick professor in the University, Oxford, a copy of which work is in the Boston Atheneum. It contains the substance of all the speculations of the learned for the last hundred years on the subject, and three or four plates, exhibiting a view of the column, and the excavations that were made about its foundation, when the very curious circumstance of its resting on a block of granite about five feet square, was discovered. Dr. White shews almost conclusively, that this monument was erected by Ptolemy Philadelphus, in the *Serapeum*, or Temple of Serapis, and that it was probably in honour of the first of his family.]



FOR THE NORTH-AMERICAN JOURNAL.

On the Fine Arts.

There are, perhaps, few subjects more grateful to our national pride, than the progress the fine arts have made under the genius and industry of our countrymen. There is a welcomeness in the reflection, that we have done something in this elevated department of the mind. We feel that we shall live in the works of art we have accomplished, we shall live in the sentiment which for ages has consecrated the canvass, which places the ancient painting in close company with the most elevated and venerable mental labours; which associates the most recent with the most remote age, and which promises to bear us along in perpetual remembrance. We feel a pride in these reflections, because they assure us, we shall not be forgotten: we feel, that when time shall have confirmed the decisions of nature, our age may constitute a venerable antiquity.

It is grateful to know, that in the brightest periods of the mind in earlier times, the fine arts most vigorously flourished. While some men were giving language to thought, and words to nature, by one species of signs; others were occupied with giving character to the marble, or perpetuating passing events, by the species of painting then in use. Now, it